

STATE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

CEREAL HARVEST FORECAST, 1957-58

Reports on their harvest prospects have been received from 2,759 farmers representing 36% of the total area under crop, and the estimated acreages and yields set forth in this Bulletin are based on these reports. The following summary compares the 1957-58 estimate with the actual results for 1956-57 and the mean of the 10 years ended 1956-57:-

			Estimated 1957-58	Actual 1956-57	Mean 10 years to 1956-57
Wheat -	Area	Acres	1,335,000	1,438,289	1,760,371
	Yield	Bushels	15,200,000	31,431,547	30,136,224
	Average				
	Per Acre	Bushels	11.39	21.85	17.12
Barley -	Area	Acres	1,200,000	1,221,737	889,287
	Yield	Bushels	17,700,000	34,002,876	20,511,529
	Average				
	Per Acre	Bushels	14.75	27.83	23.07
Oats -	Area	Acres	400,000	427,192	335,696
	Yield	Bushels	3,100,000	8,318,296	5,153,387
	Average				
	Per Acre	Bushels	7.75	19.47	15.35
Rain, April-Nov.		Inches	8.72	18.55	13.81

COMMENTS.

Seasonal Conditions:- The average rainfall over the agricultural areas for the crop growing period April-November was only 8.72 inches compared with the mean of 12.54 for the previous 52 years, yet an average wheat yield of 11.39 bushels is expected to be harvested compared with the mean average of 11.57 bushels. Since the agricultural areas rainfall was first calculated in 1905, 1957 was the third driest recorded. In 1914 the rainfall was only 6.77 inches and the wheat yield averaged only 1.41 bushels and in 1940 the rainfall was 8.13 inches with a yield of 6.97 bushels. The 1944 rainfall of 8.84 inches was practically the same as the 1957 fall of 8.72 inches but the wheat yield was only 5.70 bushels compared with the estimated 11.39 for 1957-58. The better wheat yield per inch of rainfall can be attributed inter alia to better farming methods and also to the fact that there is less cropping in the drier areas of the State. However the inclusion in the average rainfall figures of the falls for stations in those drier areas where there is now less cropping than in former years, really means that for recent years the average rainfall over the areas in which most crops are grown is understated. This matter is under review at present.

It will be noted from the table above that the average April-November rainfall for 1956-57 was 18.55 inches, compared with a mean for the 10 seasons ended : 1956-57 of 13.81 and with the 52 year mean of 12.54 inches. The wheat yields for the respective periods averaged 21.85, 17.12 and 11.57 bushels.

The total areas now estimated to have been sown for grain, hay and green fodder with the various cereals are less than farmers stated last autumn that they intended to sow. The particulars are as follows:- Wheat - now estimated 1,425,000 compared with 1,500,000 acres intended, barley 1,250,000 compared with 1,325,000 and oats 780,000 compared with 1,015,000, making a total estimated area of 3,455,000 for the 3 cereals compared with the 3,840,000 acres intended. The dry seeding period was the principal cause of the reduced sowing. Oats were particularly affected in this respect.

Areas Failed. In the following paragraphs, the areas which failed are included in the areas shown for grain.

Wheat: The estimated yield of 15,200,000 bushels is the lowest since 1944-45 when 21,033,841 bushels were harvested and just exceeds half the mean of 30,136,224 bushels for the previous 10 years. The record average yield was 21.85 bushels per acre from 1,438,289 acres in 1956-57, and the mean average yield over the last 10 years was 17.12 compared with the estimated 11.39 for this season. It is estimated

that the area under wheat for grain was 1,335,000 acres for 1957-58 compared with the mean for the previous 10 seasons of 1,760,371 acres. This is the lowest area harvested for grain since 1878-79 when 1,305,851 acres were harvested.

Barley: The estimated acreage of Barley for grain of 1,200,000 acres is practically the same as the 1,221,737 acres for the previous season, but the yield of 17,700,000 bushels is only slightly over half of last year's record yield of 34,002,876 bushels. The estimated average per acre was 14.75 bushels compared with the actual average of 27.83 for the previous year. The mean acreage for the previous 10 seasons was 889,287 and the mean yield 20,511,529 bushels with an average of 23.07 bushels.

Oats: It is estimated that 3,100,000 bushels will be harvested from 400,000 acres with an average of 7.75 bushels per acre as compared with the mean over the last 10 seasons of 5,153,387 bushels from 335,693 acres with an average of 15.35 bushels per acre. This year's estimate is the lowest since 1946-47 when 2,780,364 bushels were harvested from 252,525 acres. The record yield for oats was 8,318,296 bushels from 427,192 acres in 1956-57.

Field Peas: The estimated yield of 490,000 bushels is a decrease on the previous record of 632,795 bushels in 1956-57, giving an average yield of 14.00 bushels from 35,000 acres. The area is slightly less than the record of 35,280 acres in 1954-55.

Hay: During recent years there have been decreased acreages cut for cereal hay, but there have been increased acreages of meadow hay and improved pastures. The estimated area of wheaten, barley and oaten hay for 1957-58 is 175,000 acres yielding 168,000 tons at an average of 0.96 compared with 150,196 acres, 230,160 tons for an average of 1.53 tons in 1956-57.

General: The estimated combined yields of wheat, barley and oats total 35,500,000 bushels and is slightly less than half the previous record of 73,752,719 bushels in 1956-57.

The barley yield exceeded that of wheat for the first time in 1956-57 and it is noted that the estimated barley yield for 1957-58 again exceeds that of wheat.

The total estimated area of wheat, barley and oats for grain; hay and green fodder is estimated at 3,455,000 acres compared with 3,572,805 acres the previous season. The combined area has remained fairly constant during the last 13 years. The maximum area was 5,293,862 acres in 1930-31 and the lowest in recent years was 2,538,225 in 1943-44.

A.W. BOWDEN

Deputy Commonwealth Statistician
& Government Statist.

Bureau of Census & Statistics,
ADELAIDE.

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